

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT ELAB SW

SUBJ: POLITICS AND SOCIAL REFORM DOMINATE LO METALWORKERS CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: SEPTEMBER 16 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION AND DEFINITION OF BROAD SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAM DOMINATED AUGUST 26-31 POWERFUL LO METALWORKER UNION'S CONGRESS. MAIN THRUST OF CONGRESS WAS (1) TO DEFINE BROAD SOCIAL REFORM PACKAGE TO BE ATTAINED THROUGH PARALLEL TRADE UNION AND POLITICAL/LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGNS, (2) TO STRESS NEED FOR RE-ELECTION SEPTEMBER 16 OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVT IF REFORM PACKAGE IS TO BE REALIZED.
END OF SUMMARY.

2. QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS OF 400,000 MEMBER LO METALWORKERS TRADE UNION, SWEDEN'S LARGEST, FOLLOWED PARALLEL PATHS OF DEFINING TRADE UNION SOCIAL REFORM PACKAGE AND OF WORKING FOR RE-ELECTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC (SAP) GOVT IN SEPTEMBER 16 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. SOCIAL REFORM PACKAGE, TO BE REALIZED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION, OUTLINED GOALS OF (1) FULL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM WITH EXPANDING PUBLIC SECTOR, GREATER PLANNING AND CONTROL OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT, AND INCREASED RESOURCES FOR TECHNICAL R AND D,

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(2) GREATER CONTROL THROUGH LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL

TRADE UNION COOPERATION OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS, BOTH FOREIGN-OWNED COMPANIES IN SWEDEN AND SWEDISH-OWNED COMPANIES OPERATING ABROAD,

(3) INCREASED EMPLOYMENT SECURITY AND INCOME MAINTENANCE. INCOME SECURITY TO INCLUDE SHIFT FROM PEICE WORK RATES TO MONTHLY SALARIES FOR PRODUCTION WORKERS,

(4) BROADENED SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PHASED RETIREMENT BEGINNING AT 60,

(5) SHORTER WORK DAY, PARTICULARLY FOR SHIFT WORK, AND A FIFTH WEEK OF PAID VACATION,

(6) GREATER WORKER AND TRADE UNION INFLUENCE IN SETTING COMPANY POLICY, INCLUDING VOICE IN PERSONNEL POLICY AND EXECUTION,

(7) WORKER INFLUENCE ON JOB ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY QUESTIONS.

3. ALTHOUGH LARGE PART OF REFORM PROGRAM TO BE ATTAINED THROUGH DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS, EMPHASIS AT CONGRESS WAS ON NEED TO ASSURE FRIENDLY GOVT IN REALIZING LEGISLATIVE ASPECTS OF PROGRAM. DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND SAP GOVT REITERATED IN ALMOST EVERY MAJOR ADDRESS WITH THREAT OF VIRTUAL STOP TO PROGRAM PROMISED IF SAP LOSES POWER IN SEPTEMBER 16 ELECTION.

4. PRIMIN PALME AND LO PRESIDENT GUNNAR NILSSON JOINED CHORUS OF METAL SPEAKERS IN POINTING TO IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION. PALME BELITTLED OPPOSITION PROPOSALS RE: EMPLOYMENT AS HOLDOVERS FROM 1920'S LIKELY TO RESULT IN BOTH LOWER WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT. ALSO SAID CENTER PARTY FALLDIN'S PROPOSAL FOR TAX CREDITS FOR EMPLOYERS CREATING NEW JOBS WOULD BENEFIT ONLY EMPLOYERS SUCH AS VOLVO WHO WOULD USE THESE CREDITS TO IMPORT FOREIGN LABOR AT EXPENSE OF HARD-TO-EMPLOY SWEDES. PALME THUS TOOK SWIPE AT SAME TIME AT FALLDIN AND AT EMPLOYERS UPON WHOSE BACK HE IS PALCING BLAME FOR CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT. NILSSON ADDED THAT MAJOR ELEMENT OF REFORM, REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME, BASED EQUALLY ON LEGISLATED CHANGES IN TAX POLICY WHEREBY WORKER UNCLASSIFIED

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PAYS LESS AND EMPLOYER MORE, AND NEGOTIATED INCREASES IN WAGES, PENSIONS, FRINGES. UNIONS THEREFORE MUST HAVE SAP GOVT. (NILSSON THEREBY ALSO DREW CLEAR LINK BETWEEN GOVT'S TAX PROPOSAL AND LO GOALS IN NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR.)

5. METALWORKERS RESPONDED TO ELECTORAL PITCHES BY APPROPRIATING FROM UNION TREASURY SKR 1 1/2 MILLION TO SAP ELECTION FUND. VOTE

WAS UNANIMOUS IN SPITE OF PRESENCE OF NUMBER OF COMMUNIST PARTY
(VPL) MEMBERS AMONG DELEGATES.

6. COMMENT: SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAM WAS BRINGING TOGETHER IN
ONE PACKAGE VARIOUS TRADE UNION PROPOSALS PRESENTED DURING RECENT
PAST FOR INCREASING ECONOMIC SECURITY AND WORKER AND TRADE UNION
INFLUENCE WITH EMPLOYERS. POLITICAL EMPHASIS AT METALWORKERS'
CONGRESS REFLECTS REALITY THAT FRIENDLY GOVT IS NEEDED IF
PROGRAM IS TO BE REALIZED AND CONCERN WITH POSSIBLE OUTCOME
OF SEPTEMBER 16 ELECTION, ALL LO UNIONS ARE PUTTING RESOURCES
BEHIND ELECTORAL DRIVE. APPROXIMATELY SKR 10 MILLION IN DIRECT
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM UNION TREASURIES ALREADY GIVEN TO SAP, IN
ADDITION TO DUES COLLECTED FROM 800,000 LO MEMBERS COLLECTIVELY
ENROLLED IN PARTY. ABOUT 100 TRADE UNION STAFFERS WORKING
FULL-TIME BEATING ELECTORAL BUSHES. UNION LEADERS BEGINNING
TO EXHIBIT INCREASED CONFIDENCE CLAIMING SAP GAINING GROUND
EVEN THOUGH THEY CONCEDE THAT MANY VOTERS ARE STILL UNDECIDED.
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